THE ZOOLOGIST

No. 207.—March, 1894.

ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE BEARDED SEAL (*PHOCA BARBATA*) ON THE NORFOLK COAST.

By Thomas Southwell, F.Z.S.

The vertebrate fauna of the British Isles is so thoroughly worked out that the addition of a new species must of necessity be of rare occurrence, and it cannot even be hoped, so closely have all the residents been studied, that such addition is likely to be made by the subdivision of any recognised indigenous species, as happened with *Arvicola glareolus;* it follows, therefore, that we must look for such increase to exotic stragglers, and even these must be confined to birds and marine mammals. Of the former the county of Norfolk has been exceptionally prolific, and of the latter we can point to at least one species, viz., *Phoca hispida.* It gives me great pleasure, therefore, to record the occurrence of yet another species, which I think I am right in saying has not previously been recognised as British.

On Dec. 10th, 1892, Mr. H. Laver, of Colchester, very kindly informed me that a living Seal was being exhibited in that town, which he could not recognise, and which he suggested, from its hairy muzzle, might be *Phoca barbata.* The description which Mr. Laver gave of the animal was briefly as follows:—Length, five or six feet; sex, male; skin, black with a few hairs only on the shoulders, which were otherwise quite bare; head remarkably narrow and flat, suddenly falling off to a broad nose; fore flippers armed with strong claws, fully two inches long, curved, the third digit the longest; beard long, curved, and very abundant, the individual bristles flat and smooth.

It had when Mr. Laver saw it evidently been captured some time, as it was very gentle and would permit any amount of handling; it seemed very intelligent, and possessed great freedom of motion in its fore limbs. The man who was exhibiting the Seal expressed his intention of visiting Norwich on his way back to Lynn, where he lived, and promised to communicate with me on his arrival here, but did not keep his promise. Mr. Laver sent me one of the bristles of the moustache, and from this and his description I was strongly of opinion that his suggestion as to the species of the Seal was correct, although the bristle differed in length and curvature from those in my possession, which I had obtained from undoubted skins of this species in the Dundee warehouses.

My endeavours to trace the man William Hudson, who exhibited the Seal at Colchester, were for some time unsuccessful, but Dr. Plowright, of Lynn, learned that the animal had died in that town early in February, 1893, and came into the hands of a man named Williamson, who buried it in his garden in a bed which was sown with onions; there could be no question as to the identity of this animal, for in addition to Hudson's statement as to his disposal of it, it was described to Dr. Plowright by its last owner as having "no hair on its back, in consequence of its having been kept in too small a box," and its whiskers were stated to be "six inches long."

At this stage of the proceedings I communicated with Mr. S. F. Harmer, of the University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, with the result that he agreed to purchase the animal for that Museum, and after the crop of onions had been harvested, the body was exhumed and sent to Cambridge. On the 13th October, 1893, Mr. Harmer sent me the skull for inspection after comparing it with other skulls of the same species, and there is not the least doubt that the animal was a young male of *Phoca barbata*, in evidence of which the mounted skeleton will in due course be placed in the Cambridge Museum.

The tale told by the man Hudson not being in all respects satisfactory, the Rev. S. E. Blomefield, of Burnham Sutton, also Rector of Burnham Overy, was so kind as to make enquiries for me on the spot, and learned from a man named Rudd that he, assisted by three others—Parr, Atkins, and Smith—captured this Seal in a creek in Overy Harbour by driving it into a strong net

in which it became entangled; they then placed it in a donkey-cart and brought it home. Afterwards they put it into a boat with water, and exhibited it in the neighbourhood, amongst others to Mr. Blomefield and his family. The precise date of capture I cannot ascertain, but it was some time before May, 1892. After some months Rudd sold the Seal to a man at Lynn known as "Tater Billy," who proves to be William Hudson.

In his memoir on the Seals in the 'Challenger' Reports (vol. xxvi. part 2, p. 61), Sir William Turner points out that *Phoca barbata* differs externally from the other species of *Phoca*, "in having a broader muzzle, in the middle digit of the manus being the longest instead of the digits slightly decreasing in length from first to fifth, and in possessing four, and not two, mammæ." To this may be added, as stated in my little book on the 'Seals and Whales,' that the mystacial bristles are "simply flattened hairs without the impressed pattern found in the bristles of the known British species," and this I believe to be a good and ready mode of distinguishing this animal. Of course the cranial characters afford the best mode of distinction, but these are not always available.

I wish to record my indebtedness to Mr. Laver, Dr. Plowright, and Rev. S. E. Blomefield, for the very considerable amount of trouble they took in assisting me to trace and identify this interesting capture.

ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTES FROM NORFOLK.

By J. H. Gurney, F.Z.S.

My last notes ended somewhat abruptly on September 30th, 1892, and missed recording what the following two months, October and November, were remarkable for — *viz.*, a quite unprecedented visit of Lapland Buntings. Dr. Power was the first to notice the northern incursion of this species on Oct. 13th at Cley, where some remained for the winter, but the greatest number were seen on the Caister denes, near Yarmouth. There the arrival of Lapp Buntings was greeted by such hostile reception on the part of birdcatchers, bird-dealers, and others, that I am sorry to say that at least fifty-six were netted and shot. This migration was probably due to a gale from the east on

Oct. 14th. The effect of that gale in Yorkshire may be ascertained by reading Mr. Cordeaux's article (Zool. 1892, p. 417). It resulted in the most remarkable rush of migratory birds ever witnessed by that good observer in his long experience. The veteran Herr Gätke noticed this "rush" also in Heligoland, but no Lapland Buntings were obtained there. I find they do well in confinement, and are fond of oats. They perch like Snow Buntings, but their more terrestrial habits were noticed in a wild state. In July the males in my possession had black throats, which were retained by one of them until October, and a hen bird became pied.

On Oct. 16th two Grey Shrikes were shot, and others seen about this date, being perhaps some of those seen by Mr. Cordeaux at Spurn Point (Zool. 1892, p. 419) after the great gale just mentioned. On the same day a Sabine's Gull was caught at Wells (Feilden, Zool. 1892, p. 423), and my duck-pond was visited by a Shoveller and a Pochard from Saham Mere. A Rough-legged Buzzard was shot at Holkham. 28th.—Black-throated Diver at Cley. 29th.—Hen Harrier and Merlin in Yarmouth Market (Patterson). 31st.—Black Redstart caught at Yarmouth (Smith).

Nov. 2nd.—I received from Mr. Patterson the remains of a Pomatorhine Skua, which he had found on the shore, and a few days afterwards a Puffin was found on the beach at Cromer. 7th.—A Sea Eagle was seen at Northrepps, first on an ash-tree, and then on the wing, mobbed by Rooks; it was shot next day at Runton. 11th.—Mr. Roberts, of Norwich, received from Sir Savile Crossley a singular melanistic Partridge, shot at Campsea Ash, in Suffolk, which was exhibited by him to the Naturalists' Society at its next meeting. It had a black chin and black cheeks, and the rest of the plumage may be described as many shades darker than the ordinary type. In 1891 Sir Savile Crossley's party shot several others similarly coloured. 18th.—A female Scops Owl was obtained near Holt (C. Dack), not so grey as the Cromer one of 1861. Anyone interested in Owls may see in the Norwich Museum a good series of the genus *Scops*, which is now divided and subdivided into sixty-five species (not counting *Heteroscops*, *Gymnoscops*, and *Pseudoscops*), represented in the Museum by 243 specimens. 19th.—Mr. Patterson saw a Shoveller at Yarmouth. 21st.—I received a male Gadwall from Saham Mere, where fifteen others were seen by Mr. Partridge on the following day. A Grey-

headed *Porphyrio* was shot at Stoke Ferry this month, which had most likely escaped from confinement in the North of Ireland (*vide* 'Field,' April 29th, 1893).

From Mr. G. Smith I learn that a young Iceland Gull, which he identified by its measurements, was shot at Yarmouth on Dec. 6th, and to him also I am indebted for the information that a Greater Shearwater was obtained at Caister on the 22nd, and another Iceland Gull at Scratby on the 28th. I have since had the pleasure of inspecting all three. The Shearwater is a very dark bird above, and pure white beneath, without a smoky patch on the belly. The Iceland Gulls are, from their size and measurements, undoubted. One of them is a bird of the year, but the other is older, and is white all over, except a tinge of brown and some brown chequering on the secondaries. There has been a small migration of them this year to the east coast. The Greater Shearwater is an addition to our county list, and the fourth new species which has been recognised since the completion of 'The Birds of Norfolk.' 24th.—A white, or rather very pale, variety of the Dunlin was shot at Wells by Mr. F. D. Wheeler, with which the list of rarities for 1892 concludes.

Before passing on to another year, I may remark that the supposed "Bimaculated Duck" taken in Suffolk in January (Zool. 1892, p. 110), judging from a very good picture of it, was a hybrid between a Pintail and a Wild Duck. It has now passed into the possession of M. Suchetet, who is making a study of all wild hybrids, and was good enough to send the painting for my inspection.

Jan. 1st, 1893.—Five Bewick's Swans were shot at Yarmouth (Smith), and eight others were seen. 2nd.—Thousands of Wood Pigeons appeared at Yarmouth (Smith). 6th.—A Little Gull at Yarmouth (Smith). 9th.—A Scoter, which must have lost itself, was shot at Northrepps, flying over a wood half-a-mile from the sea. 10th.—A Wellingtonia and a Japanese Cyprus were barked by Green Woodpeckers until their stems became quite red, the colour of the under fibre, and the trees were in danger of perishing. 22nd. A Russian Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula major*, Brehm) was shot on Caister denes. Its measurements exceeded those of a common Bullfinch considerably:—thus, length 5·7; expanse of wing 9·7; wing from carpus 3·8 (*cf.* Trans. Norfolk Nat. Soc. p. 421). *P. major* is more easily separable than many so-called subspecies, and it is

probable that this is not its first occurrence in England, though it may have been one of the introduced Bullfinches mentioned by Mr. Tuck (Zool. 1892, p. 145).

There is little to record in February, except that the Sparrows were picking all the yellow crocusses to pieces, and some Waxwings made their appearance, as will be mentioned presently.

Mr. Southwell reported an adult female Goshawk on March 29th at Somerleyton, and later on in the spring a Serin Finch came under his observation. The latter was taken by a bird-catcher named Crompton at Saxmundham, in Suffolk, and was sent to Yarmouth, where Mr. Patterson is confident he saw another. It lived in a cage until July, and was a female bird, very dark in plumage, the result possibly of confinement, and more or less artificial food.

In January, February, and March, there was a considerable incursion of Waxwings in Norfolk, and twenty-five are noted in my diary as having been killed, while several others were seen, the latest on March 6th, at Weston, and March 20th at Warham. The slaughter was not so great as it was twenty-six years ago, and one fine bird which paid me a visit was allowed to pass on unscathed. Whitethorns with haws upon them are the chief attraction to Waxwings.

April 13th.—A Grey Shrike was seen near Holt by Mr. Pashley. 22nd.—A Grey-headed Wagtail at Bradwell (T. Southwell). The Rev. Maurice N. Bird reported, through Mr. Southwell, that two Avocets were seen at Hickling on the 23rd, a pair of Jack Snipes on the 24th, thirteen Spoonbills on the 28th, and a White-winged Black Tern and two Gadwalls on May 5th.

Turning now from rare birds to some of the commoner species, I may note that April was very prolific of Long-tailed Tits' nests, of which there were six at Keswick—two in whitethorn, two in yews, one in a box-tree, and one in a juniper. The old notion that these nests have two holes is not quite exploded, notwithstanding they have only one; and it is very comical to see both head and tail sticking out of the one aperture at the same time. How the young escape suffocation is a mystery.

At Wroxham several Tits—presumably *Parus major*—were reported to be seen feeding on wasps, which were so abnormally abundant in August as to be a perfect plague. It was reported to

our Naturalists' Society, and the members were very glad to hear it, that the Bearded Tits were increasing in numbers in the Broad district, and this was afterwards confirmed by Mr. Bird. Would that the same could be said of the Garganey, which is now very rare, although Mr. Bird saw some on April 10th and August 22nd, and one or two off and on between those dates.

About this date, a curious incident occurred at Northrepps. A hen Kestrel and a small rabbit were taken together at the same time in the same steel-trap, which was placed a foot down the burrow. I mention it partly for the singularity of their capture, but it is the first time I have known a Kestrel pursue a rabbit; and this summer, also for the first time, I saw a rabbit's leg in a Barn Owl's nest. This, however, was a very small one, and the offence was condoned by the presence of numbers of mice remains, five small rats in pellets, a sparrow, and some shrews. I have never identified bats' bones in owls' pellets; but a caged Barn Owl ate a bat as if it was not for the first time. A nest of the Barn Owl in the park, on April 27th, contained seven eggs.

On May 5th the "lumps" left by the receding tide on Breydon water were reported to be black with Turnstones, Whimbrel, Knots, Godwits and Black Terns, and at the same time Black Terns were seen at Morston and Hickling. At the latter place, ten days later, Mr. Bird saw thirteen Black Terns, and on the same day Mr. Pashley wrote word that they were passing Cley in flocks, going west, while scores came up as high as the quay. There was evidently a great passage going on, for three Spoonbills were seen, and according to Mr. Pashley (whose account was afterwards confirmed verbally), "thousands of Knots, in such numbers that the noise made by their wings resembled a passing train." There were great numbers of Scoters also, and the next day (the 16th) two White-winged Terns were seen. The Knots may possibly have come from Spain, on their way northward to their breeding-haunts, for Lord Lilford has remarked that never in his life has he seen feathered fowl in such numbers as the Knots at the mouth of the Guadalquivir in May, 1872. He describes them as being in "countless myriads" ('Birds of Northamptonshire,' p. 287). They would naturally be going northwards at this time of year, and Cley might be another halting-place.

Local naturalists will be glad to hear from the Rev. Maurice

Bird that three broods of Hawfinches flew at Shropham by June 5th, and on that day he saw two Nightingales' nests in the same lime-tree, one six feet, the other ten feet from the ground; and a Blackcap's nest eighteen feet up. There must have been something to account for these extraordinary altitudes,—perhaps the presence of Stoats, which have been unusually abundant, so much so that the keeper at Hempstead had caught the unprecedented number of fifty by July 26th, and others subsequently.

On May 12th Col. Feilden saw an Osprey at Holkham, where a pair of Pink-footed Geese stayed behind, as he observed, until June 8th, long after their companions had left. He last saw them at the end of May, after which he left home; but they are believed to have been seen by the head-keeper as late as June 26th. The abundance of this species during the previous winter had been noticed and commented on (1891—2).

June 20th.—Young Sand Martins were dying in their holes at Keswick from the excessive drought.

July 3rd.—A Little Bittern was unfortunately killed at Rollesby, and on the 4th another, by the same keeper, who thought he was doing a clever thing in shooting them! Mr. Lowne reports that the second, which had been feeding on Perch, "had the appearance on the under parts of having been sitting," but that they were both males. Lord Lilford has observed, in the case of Common Bitterns which have nested in his aviaries, that the male has occasionally taken part in incubation, so that there would be nothing remarkable in a Little Bittern doing the same.

Mr. Bird reports two Herons' nests at East Somerton.

Mr. Pashley is of opinion that two pairs of Sandwich Terns bred on Blakeney Point, and eggs from one nest, or more, were taken by some boys, with the usual result that they were broken, and therefore the interesting fact is not clearly proved. He writes:—"George Long tells me his boys went to the beach for a few eggs, and they brought back three large eggs of a kind he had never seen before; they were larger than the Common Tern and coloured differently. The boys gave them to a son of Mr. George Hudson." Long considers that one clutch were hatched, as he saw the old Sandwich Terns flying past his smack at different times with "Sand-launces" (the Lesser Sand-eel) in their beaks, evidently intended for their young. These large Terns were also

seen by Mr. Evershed and other competent observers, and in August a young one was shot, but I think it was old enough to have come from the Farne Islands, where this species regularly breeds. In September about seventeen more were shot, as I am informed, a very uncalled-for and reprehensible slaughter, although they were migrants from further north. If they did breed at Cley as supposed, this is the first time they are known to have done so in Norfolk.

Aug. 13th.—A Crossbill at Burgh (Southwell). 17th.—A Wood Warbler at Cley. 24th.—A Ruddy Sheldrake was shot at Salthouse. It was a female in faded and pale plumage caused by very light edges to all the feathers. There seems to be as much reason for regarding this as a wild bird as the nineteen specimens which were recorded last year (Zool. pp. 392, 427), all my enquiries failing to elicit that anybody had lost one. A Sclavonian Grebe and two Wood Sandpipers were shot at Hickling (Bird), and five or six other Wood Sandpipers about this time at or near Yarmouth (Southwell).

Sept. 4th.—A male Icterine Warbler was shot at Wells by Mr. N. H. Joy. It is considerably greyer than the bird figured in Dresser's 'Birds of Europe" (vol. ii. p. 521), but agrees pretty well with a skin from Westphalia:—Wing, from carpus, 3.35; tarsus, .95; culmen, .22; tail, 1.9. These measurements slightly exceed those of the Blakeney bird (*cf.* Trans. Norfolk Nat. Soc. iv. p. 39). This is the sixth British specimen recorded, the last having been obtained in Yorkshire (*cf.* Cordeaux, Zool. 1891, p. 305), and the second which has been met with in Norfolk. 11th.—Two large hawks, believed to be Marsh Harriers, were seen hovering over a dead dog on Gorleston beach by Mr. Southwell. Shore Lark shot at Yarmouth. 12th.—A Little Gull at Yarmouth (Patterson). 14th.—A Lapland Bunting was shot at Cley (Power), and an Osprey was seen at Hickling (Nudd) 15th.—A Wood Sandpiper was seen at Cley by Dr. Power. 21st.—Pink-footed Geese returned to Holkham (Feilden). Shore Larks were seen at Cley (Gunn), and three Lapland Buntings were shot; others were seen at Yarmouth (Smith). 22nd.—A Lapland Bunting was shot at Yarmouth, and three more netted. A great many Twites were seen (Smith). 24th.—Tree Sparrows were noticed on Yarmouth sandhills (Patterson). 25th.—Lapland Bunting at Cley (Gunn). 26th.—Sclavonian Grebe at Cley (Gunn).

There is nothing which calls for particular remark in my note-book for October except the occurrence of a Quail at Northrepps on the 20th of that month. It was so fine up to the middle of October that strawberries were gathered out of doors, and migratory birds passed on without halting.

Nov. 9th.—A Guillemot seized a hook baited with a herring, from the Yarmouth pier, and was hauled up alive (Patterson). 10th.—Received a Pomatorhine Skua from Mr. Patterson. 16th. —A Little Auk was picked up on Overstrand beach by Mr. Cole, and about the same time three others were procured at Cley, and one at Yarmouth. Mr. Pashley had a Fork-tailed Petrel, and Mr. Smith another from the Bure Marshes on the 21st; two Glaucous Gulls and three Little Gulls were shot about the 24th, but two of them were lost. These "waifs and strays" were due probably to the tremendous weather which at that date cost many lives and the loss of nearly £100,000 worth of fishing-gear at Yarmouth alone. Undoubtedly the gales were the cause of many buffeted and half-starved Guillemots, Puffins and Razorbills being washed up dead at Cley, Cromer and Caister, and amongst them on the 23rd a young Black Guillemot which was sent alive to Norwich.

Dec. 4th.—Mr. Lowne received a very large russet-coloured female Snipe from Caister, answering to Gould's *Gallinago russata*, but from the white of the under parts being less extensive than is usually the case, it might be a hybrid between the Common Snipe and *Gallinago major*. He brought it to Norwich, where Mr. Southwell examined it, and I compared it from memory with a very curious Snipe which was shot in 1886 and shortly described at the time (Zool. 1886, p. 392). 9th. — A hybrid, tame-bred, between a Greenfinch and a Mountain Finch, which was exhibited at the Norwich Show, showed no trace of the Brambling in its plumage; another evidence that the parentage of hybrids taken in a wild state is not always to be judged by their colour. This cross must be very rare, as it has not been noticed by Mr. Macpherson in his remarks on "Hybrid Finches" (Trans. Norfolk Nat. Soc. iv. p. 367). Several hybrids between Goldfinch and Bullfinch were also exhibited, as well as a white Redpoll with a crimson forehead, one of the most beautiful varieties I remember to have seen.

NOTES ON THE ORNITHOLOGY OF OXFORDSHIRE, 1892 AND 1893.

By Oliver V. Aplin.

Where no other locality is mentioned, these notes refer to the parish of Bloxham.

1892.

Jan. 24th.—After severe weather, with snow and frosts most of the month, the weather became mild about this date. A Chaffinch sang both parts of his song many times, but both parts much curtailed. Afterwards heard from Mr. Fowler that Chaffinches were heard at Swansea the same morning. 30th.—Flock of Ring Doves, a hundred at least, in clover lea at Barford. 31st.—Yellow Bunting and Linnet singing. Received news from Mr. A. W. S. Fisher, Winchester College, that he saw on Jan. 1st, in a small spinney near Godstow, one mile and a half from Oxford, a small hawk, with pointed wings and a long narrow tail, fly out of a tree. It flew over his and his brother's heads and settled on a tree further on. The sun was low and shining full on the hawk's belly as it flew about thirty or forty feet above their heads, and its under plumage appeared to both of them to be black, no bars or markings being visible. He afterwards identified it at the Museum as *Falco vespertinus*. Also had news from Mr. W. M. Foster-Melliar that he had heard of a Peregrine Falcon being shot at Rousham. It was believed to have come after the flocks of Ring Doves at Tackley Heath.

Feb. 3rd.—Examined at Mr. Wyatt's a local pied Blackbird, recently received—a very old glossy black male, with brilliant orange bill, head much and rather evenly mottled with pure white; the only other white about it was on one or two feathers about the under tail-coverts and thighs. I think that, after the head, the thighs are the parts which most commonly show white. 13th.—Put up a covey of Red-legged Partridges, and afterwards watched them for some time in the middle of a ploughed field. They were evidently pairing and were very noisy, calling loudly, "chuck chuck chuckar, chuckar-chuck." Grey Partridges have been paired since the last few days of January. 20th.—Still great numbers of Wood Pigeons on the clover.

March 12th.—Red-legged Partridges paired. Found to-day

the remains of a Missel Thrush and a Wood Pigeon killed and eaten by a hawk on the banks of the Swere; this makes two of the former and three of the latter which I have found there lately. 13th.—Very cold weather again. Saw some boys walk across the ice on a pond. Peewits on the fallows for the first time. 16th.—Mild again. Blackbird singing. 19th.—Saw a Chiffchaff catching gnats in a very sheltered spot. Afterwards had news from Mr. Fowler that he saw one on the 18th on the sheltered side of a wood at Kingham; also that it was reported from Oxford on the 20th. On the 23rd I saw two close together, and on the 26th I noticed four along the parish brook within a dozen yards of one another, while a fifth sang at a little distance; this was the first I heard. In 'The Field' of the 19th, Mr. J. G. Cornish, referring to a note in the previous week's issue of a Thrush singing from the top of the Warden of Keble's House, which used to sing on a pine in front of the Museum, says that Oxford is the only town he knows in which Blackbirds and Thrushes sing from the tops of houses. He attributes it to the fact of the nesting sites being so close to the houses; the habit is not uncommon there. A Thrush, he said, sang at that date from the roof of Hertford College, and Blackbirds not infrequently sang from gable ends of villas in the north of Oxford. 25th.—Examined, at Mr. Wyatt's shop in Banbury, a pair of Long-eared Owls, sent to him from Chipping Norton on the 21st. The male was a very grey bird; the female warm brown, and slightly larger. He said the eggs in the ovary were quite small. 26th.—Saw two male Wheatears, and a pair, in the arable fields north-east of the village. The former were very pure grey, with distinct black head-marks. The buff underneath was only developed on the throat and upper breast, and I think this is generally so in our early, or small, spring birds. I saw a pair on April 24th on a fallow; and on May 10th I observed a very large Wheatear (male, grey on upper parts), doubtless one of the large race of late migrants. It frequently settled, after being disturbed, on the top of a fairly tall hedge, and never on the ground, though the turf was very short. The Wheatear does not breed here, save very exceptionally. At Kingham, in the afternoon (March 26th), Mr. Fowler and I saw, in the Evenlode meadows, a flock of Redwings containing, I should think, quite two or three hundred birds; they were very noisy. One apart in a tall hedge

sang his "trui trui trui," but not very full. A flock of fifty or sixty Meadow Pipits in a meadow (some little parties at Bloxham in the morning); when flushed they, or most of them, settled in trees for a few minutes, which a recent writer says they never do. 27th.—Kingham; another little flock of Meadow Pipits. The migration of this bird must be in full swing.

April 3rd.—Put up a Jack Snipe at my feet from a ditch running into the Sorbrook. 10th.—Redstarts have arrived in some numbers. (On May 1st I noted that they were in greater abundance than ever; this bird seems to arrive in steadily increasing numbers each year.) Being over the borders, in Warwickshire, below Edgehill, on April 2nd, to see the Parliamentary Steeple Chase, I noticed the Lesser Whitethroat in song—a very early arrival; it appeared here on the 11th. On the 10th saw a pair of Barred Woodpeckers in some big alders on the Sorbrook bank towards Broughton. Tree Creeper in song. 16th.—Saw a White Wagtail in a sheep-fold. Peewit's nest of four hard-set eggs on ploughed field; nest merely a hollow with a few short bits of flattened manure-straw. 18th.—A White Wagtail on the banks of the Cherwell at Bodicote. An old farmer's widow, who formerly lived between here and Woodstock, knows the Wryneck, and enquired of me lately if the "Cuckoo's mate" had arrived, describing its note at the same time. Now at the present day the Wryneck is a rare bird in Oxon, and this is further evidence of its comparative abundance years ago, which I have mentioned before. 24th.—Common Sandpiper on the Sorbrook near Broughton. A little flock of Meadow Pipits; this is late for these passing migrants.

May 3rd.—Saw, at Mr. Bartlett's, a Grey Shrike, apparently adult; it showed a little white on the secondaries and a good patch when the coverts were brushed aside a little; but the rump and upper tail-coverts were wonderfully dark grey. It was sent from Hook Norton on April 11th, a late date for this bird to occur in Oxon. "F. W. L." records seeing four or five Barred Woodpeckers in an elm near Norham Gardens, Oxford, early in the morning of April 2nd. He has seen them in St. Giles in the daytime ('Oxford Times'); I am acquainted with this observer's name. A Bittern was shot in the Windrush in the early part of March, and taken to Mr. Wells, of Burford ('Oxford Journal'). 7th.—Flocks of Fieldfares below Buttermilk Hall, near Barford,

numbering one hundred at least. Mr. F. C. Aplin saw a flock at Bodicote the same day. This is very late for them to be here in numbers. 8th.—Flock of a score or so of Fieldfares near Barford. 11th.—Listened to-night for some time to a Nightingale in the lane leading from this village to Milton. It is now a good many years since one was heard in the parish. Curiously enough, I was only talking about them to the present occupier of Wickham Farm and Mill a few days before; he said they always used to have them at Wickham years ago, and had an idea that the wet summer of 1879 killed them all; but it was before that date that they left off visiting this parish. He rather startled me by saying—

"'A thorn in my nest
Disturbs my rest,'

that is what they say." He said he had heard this rhyme all his life, since he asked as a child why Nightingales sang at night, and was answered thus. It seems a rather interesting local survival. 12th.—Heard a Whimbrel, which called as it passed over, going N.N.E. at a great height apparently. This was at 9.30 p.m., wind calm, but had been easterly in the day, rather cloudy, and full moon up about half-an-hour. These birds pass over here pretty regularly at migration times, but very rarely alight. 13th.—Under this date Mr. Fowler writes from Oxford:—"This morning I went to Marston Wood, where the number of Nightingales was quite astonishing. I am not surprised to hear of yours. I really think they are increasing. We have one in the Parks." 16th.—A Bodicote mason, who knew all about the former abundance of the Nightingale at Bodicote about five-and-twenty years ago, told Mr. F. C. Aplin to-day that there was one about a mile from the village, where the latter subsequently heard it. 21st.—Green Woodpecker's nest about fifteen feet up in the trunk of an elm between here and Milcombe. On account partly of the abundance of timber on that side of the parish, and partly of the numerous ant-hills on Milcombe Gorse, close at hand, these birds are really common here. The Vicar of Milcombe showed me a Goldcrest's nest in his garden, and told me he had half-a-dozen pairs of Goldfinches about. This is another bird which has increased considerably of late years. I do not consider it at all an uncommon thing to see two or three pairs in a summer's day now. A day or two after this there were two males in song in a small

apple-orchard at Little Barford. To return to Green Woodpeckers, I may state that on the same day that I found the pair nesting we saw, in the afternoon, one bird, and heard others in the distance; this was while merely walking across the few fields which divide the villages. 25th.—Mr. F. C. Aplin saw, not far from Balscote (at the point where the lane from Shutford cuts into the Stratford road), a pair of birds which could only have been Wood Larks. Described as being smaller than Sky Larks, very short and "dumpy" in shape, and having a remarkably large crest, and the brown plumage distinctly marked on the shoulders and sides of body with narrow whitish marks. They were on a low flat-topped wall bordering a line of plantation.

June 18th.—I went to Kingham, to see the Marsh Warblers which Mr. Fowler has already written upon (Zool. 1892, p. 303), and on this and the following day heard and saw a good deal of them. Sedge Warblers and one Reed Warbler also inhabited the osier-bed, and I may add now that in 1893 (the osiers having been cut in the spring) Mr. Fowler found one or two pairs of Grasshopper Warblers in possession; the osier-bed has therefore held four species of River or Swamp Warblers. 19th.—In Bruern Wood we heard a Nightingale in good song between 12 and 1 p.m. Garden Warblers common and especially noticeable. Observed Wood Wren in the oaks, and others in Churchill Heath Wood. 30th.—Examined a young Hawfinch caught this month before it could fly, in a garden at Neithrop, Banbury. I afterwards saw a young bird in the flesh, shot at the Elms, Banbury, on July 26th, where others, old and young, had been seen.

July 14th.—Mr. Darbey, of Oxford, assured me he had cased up the nest and eggs of a Marsh Warbler, taken from a laurel-bush at Wolvercote this summer. Mr. Darbey knows the nest and eggs of the Reed Warbler well; these eggs had larger and more distinct blotches. I have not yet been able to examine the specimens. 15th.—Observed a female Red-backed Shrike close to their old haunt near the brickyard on the road from Broughton to Banbury; it had just impaled a yellow-banded bumble-bee; indeed the Shrike was in the act when I caught sight of her. 30th.—Saw a pair of Red-backed Shrikes, with young on the wing, in a small close with tall hedges just outside the village. They were still there two days later, and it is curious that the old birds escaped notice before; but, until the hay-grass is cut,

many of our fields afford birds perfect seclusion. These are the first I have seen in this parish during six summers' residence. 31st.—Heard that there were several nests of the Hawfinch in Cornbury Park and the adjoining parts of Wychwood Forest this year. In the house I noticed the following local specimens:—Scaup, 1868; Shoveller, male, Jan., 1871; Pochard; Golden-eye, young male; also a female Harrier with no label, which, as far as I could see (the case being in a bad light), was a Marsh Harrier.

August 2nd.—The Rev. J. Goodwin told me that one evening, a day or two ago, he saw a Nightjar fly out of a tree at the edge of Milcombe Gorse; he knows the bird well in Norfolk. Here the Nightjar is a rather rare bird, but Milcombe Gorse is a suitable locality for it. 12th.—Mr. Goodwin told me of a pair of Barred Woodpeckers which hatched out in a hole in an old Portugal laurel, which they had hewn out when a branch had been blown off and the wood was rotten, in a garden at Swerford this year; the young were seen running about the tree afterwards. Early in July, while fishing in the Swere here, I saw a Barred Woodpecker settle on a dead, barkless willow on the other side the stream, and go into a hole. I crossed over, and as I approached the tree the bird went out; it was either a female or a young bird. The hole was neatly cut out, quite round, and about the width of my two first fingers. As I had never examined the nest of this bird, I could not resist the temptation of cutting it out. I found it went down six or seven inches. At the bottom was some touch-wood and one wing-feather of the bird. I can hardly think breeding had not commenced, and I do not know if this species rears two broods; perhaps the bird I saw was a young one going in for shelter; it was late afternoon and very cold. As usual with Woodpeckers' nests, there was a quantity of chips below the hole. 28th.—Observed a Common Sandpiper on the Cherwell at Bodicote. The Swifts left on the 18th or 19th; they arrived on May 7th, and have been exceptionally abundant this year.

I left England on Sept. 2nd, 1892, and did not return until June 30th following. The notes relating to the period between these dates have been, save when otherwise stated, collected by Mr. F. C. Aplin.

A Manx Shearwater, with a slight pink tint on breast, was shot at Bodicote on Sept. 3rd. A Puffin was caught alive in the canal at Banbury on Oct. 18th.

1893.

March 28th.—The Cuckoo was reported by Mr. W. Wyatt, of Banbury (who ought not to be mistaken), as heard by him on this date. I confess I am not myself an unhesitating believer in March Cuckoos. Swifts arrived on May 3rd, and were numerous the next day. A Nightingale sang for about a fortnight early in May, 1893, in the Bodicote Vicarage gardens; the Vicar believed there were two. One took up its quarters in the Bloxham-gate Spinney, on the Bloxham Grove estate, as the owner informed me. Formerly they were heard there annually, but this is the first which has been heard since 1874. Mr. T. Bennet, of Deddington, tells me that there were again some (as there have been for the last few years) on the south side of that place. Some have been heard also at Milcombe this year, as the Vicar informs me. I have recently examined a Nightingale's egg of the Blue-throat type, which was taken from a nest of four eggs at Islip on May 5th, 1893. I have previously noted the occurrence of this type in Oxfordshire (*vide* Zool. 1892, p. 245). Mr. M. Foster-Melliar saw three Wild Swans (doubtless Whoopers, with which the observer is acquainted) on the flood in a large meadow known as Bestmoor, North Aston, on Jan. 24th, 1893 (*in litt.*). A Dipper was reported to Mr. Fowler as seen on more than one occasion in mid-August, 1893, on the banks of the Cherwell, in the Oxford "Parks"; and he had information from another friend which put the matter beyond doubt. For an account of the Marsh Warbler breeding at Kingham, see Mr. Fowler's note (Zool. 1893, p. 303). I received reliable information that, during the severe frost of 1890–91, a man who had been along the Cherwell with his gun returned with no less than sixteen Kingfishers.

July 8th.—The Rev. J. Goodwin told me he had seen two pairs of Red-backed Shrikes at Milcombe this summer. One night, about the third week in this month, I heard Godwits passing in a south-westerly direction over Bodicote.

Aug. 5th.—Saw a male Red-backed Shrike, much excited, in the same small close in which I saw a pair last year. The bulk of the Swifts departed on the 10th or 11th, and I did not see even a straggler after that date.

Sept. 1st.—Partridges exceptionally abundant, strong on the

wing and wild, and in some cases reported as "packed." 16th.—A good many Meadow Pipits about.

Oct. 1st.—A Chiffchaff in song in the early morning, and a Chaffinch singing, imperfectly. It has been a "Quail year." A nest of eggs was found near Deddington, as Mr. T. Bennet informs me, and I have seen an egg from another taken at Otmoor, near Islip, on May 22nd. Mr. Bennet tells me also of one or two killed early in September at Deddington. Mr. W. Warriner shot one in a cabbage-field at Adderbury on Sept. 30th. and one is recorded in 'The Field' as having been killed in the early part of October by a brother of the recorder, who lived near Banbury. In the same newspaper (Nov. 11th), Mr. W. Kinch records that seven were shot in the parish of Deddington in the second week of September. Swallows and Martins took their departure rather early. I could see none at Kingham or Bloxham on the 9th; and none at Oxford (where they usually stay so late) on the 13th. 21st.—Saw a Turtle Dove; late. 22nd.—Saw a Barred Woodpecker. Received information from a friend, who knows all our common birds well, of a little party of birds seen on a bare barley-stubble, which, from his description of their appearance and note, must have been Twites. I searched the field a day or two afterwards, but could not find them. I have no authentic record of the appearance of the Twite here. 28th.—Saw a Pied Woodpecker between here and Barford; and a small hawk, which I am pretty sure was a Merlin. 29th.—Disturbed a Turtle Dove, drinking at the brook here; as it was not two yards off when it rose, and in its hurry entangled itself for a few seconds in the tall thin hedge on the other bank, I had a good view of it. This is a very late date for it to be here; but it does not seem very unnatural, for honeysuckles, single and double dahlias, heliotrope, geraniums, auriculas, nasturtiums, sunflowers, stocks, canariensis, roses, and other flowers were blooming in the gardens, and a dish of raspberries was gathered the week before in the adjoining parish.

Nov. 7th.—Saw Fieldfares. 18th.—Severe snowstorm from the north, of the "blizzard" order, and very severe frost at night; a man frozen to death near Wardington. More snow next day, but rain and thaw at night. Nevertheless on the following day some of the lanes were impassable, and had to be dug out, and remains of the drifts were to be seen until Dec. 8th in sheltered ditches.

27th.—Received from Mr. Fowler an immature Puffin, which had been picked up a few days before in a swede-field at Stonesfield, and died on the 25th; another was caught in Banbury about the same date.

Dec. 8th.—News from Mr. Fowler of a Great Crested Grebe, apparently immature, shot on the Isis, just below Oxford, and brought to him. 9th.—Large flocks of Fieldfares here now, which are making short work of the abundant and well-ripened crops of haws. 10th.—News from Mr. Sutton A. Davies, Winchester College, of a Snow Bunting, showing a good deal of white, which was shot at Goddington, near the north-eastern boundary of the county, on or about the 5th inst., and sent to him in the flesh. The Snow Bunting is a very rare visitor to Oxfordshire.

The North Newington Sparrow Club destroyed during the past year 2906 birds and 1328 eggs. In four years 10,300 birds and 4700 eggs. There are also Clubs at Shutford, Adderbury, Milton, and Deddington. The damage done by Sparrows to ripening corn and thatched buildings in this neighbourhood of late years has been enormous.

In October some Rooks came to three or four elm-trees on the outskirts of the village and built three nests, but I do not think they laid eggs. No Rooks have been known to breed there before. Some rook-trees between here and Milcombe have been recently cut down, and the birds, now forced to find new quarters, may have belonged to that colony. October was very warm. In 'The Field' of Nov. 11th, a correspondent, writing from Charlbury, stated that about three weeks before two pairs of Rooks began building there, completed their nests, and began sitting. Subsequently he saw one bird feeding the other on the nest. There were no other Rooks' nests there, the nearest rookery being a quarter of a mile off, at Cornbury Park. At Sarsden two or three nests were built, and in one of them young birds were actually hatched and fed until they were well grown; but it is believed they perished in the severe weather which set in on Nov. 18th.

THE MARTEN IN IRELAND.

By the Editor.

When discussing the question whether there is more than one species of Marten in the British Islands (Zool. 1891, p. 403), we pointed out that the elder Macgillivray, who had good opportunities for examining specimens in Scotland, came to the conclusion that the young animals have yellow throats, and are the "Pine Martens" of authors; while in old individuals the fore part of the neck and breast are white, or greyish white, or pale grey mottled with brownish. The Irish naturalist, William Thompson, of Belfast, arrived at similar conclusions, remarking that all the native specimens which had come under his own notice were yellow-breasted,* with the exception of one, which had the breast white, and was killed in the Co. Antrim. He had, moreover, observed that the yellow colour gave place to white with advancing age, and explained the greater number of yellow-breasted specimens obtained by their comparative immaturity.†

It remains to be proved whether, as is likely, *Martes sylvatica*, Nilsson, is the only species of Marten indigenous to Ireland; but there is no doubt that the animal was at one time comparatively common there, particularly in the north and west, since a lucrative trade in Marten skins was formerly carried on.

Writing on Irish mammals in 1857, the late Sir William Wilde remarked‡:— "The Marten formerly abounded in our woods, and a few still exist in some localities where portions of the ancient forests remain, among which I may specify Ballykyne, near Cong, Co. Mayo, and Kylemore, Connemara, Co. Galway."

To these localities might be added the woods and crags near Loughs Mask and Corrib in Mayo and Galway. Martens were also formerly common on the borders of Clare and Galway, where they were preserved in the woods on the estate of Raheen

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* This remark has been confirmed by other observers, *e. g.*, see Eyton, Ann. Nat. Hist. 1840, p. 290. In 1870 Mr. Glennon, the taxidermist of Dublin, received for preservation no less than thirteen Martens from different parts of Ireland, not one of which had a white breast (Zool. 1870, p. 2282). See also 'The Field,' March 18th, 1874.

† In museum specimens the yellow colour of the throat fades so much as to become at length hardly perceptible.

‡ Proc. Roy. Irish Acad. vol. vii. p. 194.

Tomgraney, Co. Clare, by the English proprietor, who, about 1860, had purchased the property in the Encumbered Estates Court.

In former times the Marten was much sought after for the sake of its fur, as we have already had occasion to remark (Zool. 1891, p. 404), and this no doubt has contributed to its gradual extinction in parts of the country where it was once common.

In the 16th century it appears that Marten skins formed an important article of commerce in Ulster. Peter Lombard, who died in 1625, mentions the wild animals, including the Wolf and Wild Boar, which were common at that period in Ulster, and adds "præcipue Martes quorum pelles plurimum æstimantur."*

In Charles the First's time Lord Deputy Strafford, in a letter to Archbishop Laud, dated Dublin, 27th November, 1638, wrote:—

"Before Christmas your lordship shall have all the Marten skins I could get either for love or money since my coming forth of England, yet not to the number I intended. The truth is that as the woods decay, so do the Hawks and Martens of this kingdom. But in some woods I have, my purpose is by all means to set up a breed of Martens; a good one of these is as much worth as a goood wether, yet neither eats so much or costs so much attendance; but then the Pheasants must look well to themselves, for they tell me these vermin [*i. e.* Martens] will hunt and kill them notably. Perchance you think now I learn nothing going up yonder amongst them into the forests and rocks."†

At one time, in all probability the Marten must have been generally distributed throughout Ireland, but as civilisation has extended inland from the east and south, and as woods have been cut down, and the country opened up by railways, drainage, and cultivation, so has this animal been gradually driven into the wilder portions of the north and west.

The following statistics, gleaned from a variety of sources, will convey some idea of its past and present distribution.

ULSTER.

Co. Donegal.—Mr. R. Patterson, of Belfast, writes that about 1880 one was caught in a rabbit-trap at Horn Head, and another at the Ards; in 1884, two near Ballyshannon; and "some years ago," two near Glenties; others seen at Glen Veigh, and Lough

* 'De regno Hiberniæ Insula Sanctorum.'

† Strafford's 'Letters and Despatches' (1688), vol. ii. p. 249.

Esk. In September, 1883, a Marten was killed not far from the town of Donegal. Mr. Chichester Hart saw one at Glenalla in 1879, and thought that the species was then certainly decreasing (Zool. 1880, p. 18). He added that it is invariably known as *Madaidh crainn*, i. e., tree-dog, and not *Cat crainn* (a name he never heard). Mr. R. Patterson writes that, about twenty-five years ago, a pair made their home in the thatch of an outhouse near Coxtown.

Co. Londonderry.—Castle Dawson and Toome Bridge are localities in this county mentioned by Thompson as former haunts of the Marten prior to 1852, and in all probability, when writing this note, Thompson had in view the specimen in the Belfast Museum labelled "Toome Bridge," which, however, is in Antrim.

Co. Antrim.—In the Belfast Museum there is a specimen labelled "Toome Bridge, Co. Antrim," May, 1851. Another was killed at Glenarm in 1866. In 1871 a third was taken at Shane's Castle, and in June, 1887, a fourth, a male, was obtained at Cookstown. Other localities in Antrim mentioned by Thompson are Glenariff; Shanes Castle Park; vicinity of Larne; Tullamore Lodge; Castle Dobbs; and Malone House, within four miles of Belfast. At the last-mentioned place a pair of Martens were discovered, he says, in possession of a Magpie's nest. Similar cases occurred in Belvoir Park, and Tollymore Park, Co. Down.* Mr. R. Patterson reports one seen at Benvarden, and one (perhaps the same) caught at Portglenone, in March, 1893; another caught at Templepatrick, in May, 1893; and, in the same year, one at Glenarm.

Co. Tyrone.—In 1870 one was caught at Moy.

Co. Fermanagh.—In this county, according to Thompson (Nat. Hist. Ireland, vol. iv. p. 9), the Marten has been met with at Florence Court. This was prior to 1852.

Co. Monaghan.—No records.

Co. Armagh.—Prior to 1852 Thompson noted that the Marten had been met with in Lord Gosford's demesne, as well as at Tandragee, and at Churchill, where it has been again met with.

Co. Down.—Amongst former haunts of the Marten in this county, noted by Thompson prior to 1852, may be mentioned

* The Marten has been known also to take possession of a Rook's nest (*cf.* 'The Field,' April 4th, 1874).

Hillsborough Park; Tollymore Park; Donard Lodge; and Belvoir Park, where a Marten inflicted a severe bite on the hand of a boy who unexpectedly found it in the nest of a Magpie. Examples have been trapped in the demesnes of Lord Roden and Lord Annesley, at Castlewellan, and two were taken some years ago at Ballynahinch, Monteith (Mr. Kerr). These were both dark brown with yellow throats. In 1882 a Marten was trapped at Castle Ward, near Downpatrick; and in January, 1886, another (a male) was killed at Warren Point. In 1884 Martens were seen between Bangor and Donaghadee.

Mr. Sheals, taxidermist, of Belfast, reported that in April, 1891, a large male Marten was trapped by Major Maxwell's keeper at Finnebrogue, Downpatrick (Zool. 1891, p. 304); and Mr. Robert Patterson reported that in October of the same year another was killed by Lord Roden's keeper, at Bryansford, near Newcastle. This was a male, which measured 28 inches from tip of nose to end of tail, and weighed 3½ lbs. Amidst the wild and broken ground of the Mourne Mountains in this county, the Marten will probably for some time yet to come defy the efforts of its would-be exterminators.

Co. Cavan.—No records.

LEINSTER.

Co. Longford.—Prior to 1852 a Marten was taken at Carrickfergus.

Co. Meath.—No records.

Co. Louth.—No records.

Co. Westmeath.—No records.

Co. Kildare.—No records.

Co. Dublin.—Dr. John Rutty, in his 'Natural History of the County of Dublin,' 2 vols. 8vo, 1772, states that "the Martern, or Marteron, *vulgo* Marten, is found at Lutterel's town, that it destroys rabbets and poultry, and is almost as mischievous as a fox" (vol. i. p. 281).

Co. Wicklow.—Mr. H. Chichester Hart reported that a Marten was killed at Luggielaw in 1865, and another at Avondale in 1872 (Zool. 1880, p. 18). The latter, which had been trapped and had a broken leg, was sent by Mr. Hart to the Dublin Zoological Society, but died on the journey. The occurrence of the Marten in Wicklow has been noted also on the

authority of Mr. A. B. Brooke, of Colebrook, Co. Fermanagh. One killed by him in this county in March, 1870, measured 28 in. from tip of nose to end of tail, and weighed 2 lbs. 12 oz. (Zool. 1870, p. 2282); this proved to be a doe with three young.

King's County.—No records.

Queen's County.—No records.

Co. Carlow.—No records.

Co. Kilkenny.—Sir R. Payne Gallwey, in his 'Fowler in Ireland' (p. 326), mentions the woods of Desart in this county as a former haunt of the Marten.

Co. Wexford.—In 1876, as reported by Mr. R. Patterson, at least four were killed at Stokestown; and in 1881, a female Marten and two young ones were taken at Oaklands. Mr. C. B. Moffat, writing to 'The Irish Sportsman' on June 4th, 1892, stated that the survival of the Marten in this county had been conclusively proved by his friend Mr. Arthur Ruttledge, of Coolbawn Cottage, near Killanne, Enniscorthy, who, on the first of May, he says, "was fortunate enough to take in one of his traps a handsome specimen, which he immediately forwarded to the Zoological Gardens in Dublin. Mr. Ruttledge informed me that this capture was quite accidental, there having been no suspicion of such a creature's presence until it was found a prisoner in a trap that had been set for rabbits. I consider that this fact much enhances the interest of the capture, suggesting as it does with what ease so wary and wild an animal may exist (even in the vicinity of poultry-yards, sheep-folds, and game-preserves) without attracting attention to its presence, unless by such a mishap as has befallen Mr. Ruttledge's victim. That relations of the captive Marten still haunt the woods about Coolbawn and other places at no great distance cannot be doubtful."

To this communication the editor of 'The Irish Sportsman' appended the following note:—

"There are several districts not far from the boundaries of the County Wexford where the Marten still exists in some numbers, and we believe that the animal in question was rather a straggler to the Co. Wexford from one of these more favoured localities than a resident in the county. It is said that the Marten is an animal which is very readily trapped, and that if it exists in a locality where rabbit-traps are used, it is certain to be

caught; indeed, we have read that the use of rabbit-traps is the principal, if not the sole cause of the extermination of the Marten in some parts of Great Britain."

MUNSTER.

Co. CLARE.—On the estate of Raheen Tomgraney, in this county, about 1860, Martens were considered fairly common, and were protected by the English proprietor, who had purchased the property in the Encumbered Estates Court.

Mr. J. F. Darling, writing from Clonakilty, Co. Cork, in 1883, forwarded the measurements of one that had been captured in the Co. Clare in that year, and which weighed 2 lbs. 5 oz.* (Zool. 1883, p. 252). It measured, from tip of nose to end of tail, 29 in.; length of head, $4\frac{3}{8}$ in.; tail, 12 in.; ditto to end of caudal vertebræ, $8\frac{1}{4}$ in.; fore limb, from head of humerus to end of claws, $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.; hind limb, similarly measured, $8\frac{7}{8}$ in.

Co. TIPPERARY.—In the woods about Clonmel (Thompson).

Co. LIMERICK.—No records.

Co. KERRY.—In the neighbourhood of Killarney, more especially near Lough Carragh, still fairly numerous. In 1856 no less than ten were trapped on the Lansdowne estate. In April, 1877, Lord Kenmare's keeper at Killarney spoke of trapping Martens there as no uncommon thing, and mentioned 7s. 6d. as the usual price he got for the skins (Zool. 1877, p. 292). In 1882 they were reported to be still fairly numerous about Lough Carragh. In 'Land and Water' of July 30th, 1892, a correspondent, signing himself "Cloonee," wrote:—"At a shooting I rented some years ago, in the wilds of Co. Kerry, Martens were very common in the dense rocky mountain woods, and we used to trap numbers of them, but I never saw one in a tree, although my dogs have put up plenty in the close covert. I found the best plan of trapping them was to tether a young live rabbit to about 18 inches of string fastened to a peg, and place four strong steel traps around it, lightly buried under the grass, and secured by chains to other pegs, being careful not to touch the traps with the naked hand. The result was that we frequently secured one

* Mr. H. A. Macpherson, in his 'Fauna of Lakeland' (p. 24), states that the average weight of a male Marten is from 4 to 5 lbs. One caught at Glenarm, Co. Antrim, in 1885, weighed 5 lbs.

or more Martens; but as their habitat was in a wild place, a long way from our lodge, we did not often set the traps. I wrote the other day to the agent of the property to enquire if he could procure me some young ones alive; but he replied that they have no keepers there now, and no trapping appliances, so I should say that Martens in that country are as plentiful, if not more numerous, than they were at the time to which I allude—some fifteen years ago."

Co. Cork.—According to Dr. R. Ball, the Marten has been met with near Youghal, and Dr. Harvey, in his 'Fauna of Cork,' mentions Barry's Court, Dunmanaway, and the woods near Bandon, as localities in which it has also occurred.

Co. Waterford.—About 1850, according to Mr. Ussher, three blind newly-born Martens were taken in the roof of a summer-house at Cappagh, and the mother was subsequently caught. Another was taken the same year at Colligan, and a pair occupied the thatch of a summer-house at Meadborough.

CONNAUGHT.

Co. Mayo.—Mr. W. C. Horsfall, writing from Tourmakeady, Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo, in April, 1874, stated that in his woods, about twelve miles from Castlebar, he had known several instances of the occurrence of the Marten ('The Field,' April 11th, 1874); and Mr. W. Garnett, in 1882, reported its occurrence at Castlebar. Sir Wm. Wilde, as above noted (p. 100), has testified to its former abundance about Ballykyne, near Cong.

Co. Sligo.—There is a specimen in the Belfast Museum which was received from Hazlewood, in this county, in 1845; and several have been killed near Sligo, two in 1887 (one in May, the other in August), and another in Nov., 1888. Col. Whyte also has furnished independent testimony as to the occurrence of the Marten in this county. On June 10th, 1876, he published the following remarks in 'The Field':—"I often see lamentations over the destruction of wild animals, and the Marten Cat mentioned as one that is almost extinct. About a fortnight since, the keeper on a distant mountain reported to me that he had found the feathers of several Grouse, destroyed by vermin. I gave him half-a-dozen traps, and desired him to bring me the animals or their skins. I received to-day (June 5th) the eleventh Marten Cat, some of them being of immense size. Now, as this

mountain was severely trapped last season, and these animals have strayed from certain woods belonging to my neighbours, it does not appear to me that there is much fear of the animal becoming extinct; and if any of the gentlemen who lament the probability would like to procure a few specimens to turn into their own coverts, I shall be happy to put them in the way of doing so." But this was written eighteen years ago. We have seen a specimen preserved in the collection of Mr. Borrer, of Cowfold, Horsham, which was sent to him by Col. Cooper, of Markree Castle, Sligo.

Co. Leitrim.—The occurrence of the Marten in this county has been noted on the authority of the late Col. J. Whyte, of Sligo (*cf.* 'The Field,' June 10th, 1876). In the Belfast Museum, where several specimens of the Marten are preserved, is one which was procured in this county in 1881. Martens used often to be seen at Glenfarne.

Co. Roscommon.—No records.

Co. Galway.—At Kylemore, Connemara, according to Sir Wm. Wilde (Proc. Roy. Irish Acad. vol. viii. p. 194), the Marten was formerly abundant, as it was also around Lough Corrib, and at Ballynahinch.

Of late years its chief enemies have been game-preservers and their keepers, who seldom or never lose an opportunity of trapping or shooting it. Nevertheless it is gratifying to know that, notwithstanding this persecution, there are still many wild districts in Ireland where Martens may hold their own for many years to come.

For any additions to this list of Irish localities for the Marten the Editor will be grateful. It is remarkable that in the first two series of 'The Zoologist' (1843—1876) not a single note is to be found on the subject of the Marten in Ireland.

In a future number it is proposed to give some information respecting the life-history, food, and habits of this animal, and to notice some interesting facts concerning it of which no mention has been made in the standard work on British Quadrupeds.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

An Egg of the Great Auk. — There was considerable excitement amongst ornithologists and oologists in London on Feb. 22nd, when an egg of the Great Auk, *Alca impennis*, was offered for sale by auction at the well-known sale-rooms of Mr. Stevens in King Street, Covent Garden. This egg, which formerly belonged to Yarrell, was purchased by him with other eggs for a trifling sum at Boulogne, about 1838, and while in his possession was figured by Hewitson in his standard work on British Birds-eggs. After Yarrell's death, in 1856, it was sold for £21 at Stevens's Sale-rooms, and through the intervention of a dealer, became the property of the late Frederick Bond, in whose beautiful collection of eggs it remained for something like twenty years, until upon the sale of his collection, in 1875, it passed into the possession of Baron Louis d'Hamonville, who bought the entire collection, and by whom it has now been once more offered for sale. An egg with so good a pedigree, and so well known to English collectors, many of whom must have seen it while in Bond's collection, was not likely to exchange hands for a trifle. Mr. Stevens, after reminding those present at the sale that the last egg of the Great Auk sold by him in 1888 realized £225, opened the biddings at one hundred pounds. £110 was quickly offered, and the biddings, mounting up by ten guineas at a time, eventually reached the exorbitant sum of three hundred guineas (£315), at which price it was declared to have been purchased by Sir Vauncey Crewe, Bart., of Calke Abbey, Derbyshire, whose name will be familiar to many readers of this Journal.

MAMMALIA.

Habits of the Otter.—Referring to the Editor's interesting article on this animal in 'The Zoologist' for February, 1894, I would point out that the "nests" constructed by the Otters amongst the reed-beds are really *not* "peculiar to the district referred to." When observing birds in certain marshes in West Jutland last May (1893), I came across "lairs" or "nests" of Otters, formed in reed- or cane-brakes, precisely similar to those described by Mr. Southwell and referred to by the Editor (p. 43). These nests did, in fact, much resemble those of Coots, except that they were much larger, and, if my memory serves me correctly, I believe I saw similar "Otter nests" in the Outer Hebrides, on certain islets in the lochs, some eleven years ago.—ALFRED C. CHAPMAN (Moor House, Leamside, Durham).

Food of the Otter.—*Apropos* of the statements (pp. 7, 53) that the Otter's food consists not only of "fish, flesh, and fowl," but also of mollusca and crustacea, the following quotation, from Messrs. Harvie Brown and

Buckley's 'Vertebrate Fauna of Argyll and the Inner Hebrides' (p. 17), is very much to the point:—"On the island of Soay, amongst many inhabited holes of the Storm Petrel, a most interesting Otter's resting-place was discovered, and with a spade was laid open for inspection from end to end. After cutting away the earthy peat and close turf of an almost cheese-like consistency throughout the whole length of the tunnel, laying back carefully each square or parallelogram of sod, we measured the length, and found it just fifteen feet. The tunnel was in average size throughout about one foot in diameter, except just at the far end, where it decreased to about four inches. Here and there it was widened out into most evident circular or oval chambers, and the sides and roof were smooth and glossy, rubbed and polished by the passage to and fro of the animal's fur. The habitation had a cunning and gradual incline upwards into the peat bank from the entrance. The latter was simply an uneven, rough, grassy-edged and semi-concealed doorway in the face of the peat slope. The passage led into and out of these larger chambers over little ridges or elevations across the floor of the passage. Though the walls of peat were damp, smooth, and glossy, and even slimy to the touch throughout both passages and chambers, yet water could not lie in the hole, unless just at the aforesaid ridges, which intersected the entrances of the tunnel below each chamber. Near the entrance of the hole, and about two to three feet from it, was evidently the family 'kitchen-midden' of the Otters, consisting of a very considerable heap of the domestic 'rejectamenta,' not less than five or six inches in height and nine inches in width. This occupied a side chamber made to one side of the tunnel. Harvie Brown gathered up a handful of this material, which on examination was found to consist of fragments of *shells of mollusca*, and upon a more minute examination afterwards, remains of fish, *lobster-shells*, and the hair of some small mammal were identified. It is much to be regretted that we did not have a photograph of the place taken on the spot, laid open as it thus was to the light of day, and the internal economy of the Otters' home displayed."

Food of the Badger.—On Jan. 18th we caught a Badger in a trap with a Wood Pigeon in its mouth. I know that a Badger will take young birds and rabbits, but I did not imagine that it could capture so wary a bird as a full-grown Wood Pigeon.—(Sir) JOHN DILLON (Bart.), (Lismullen, Navan, Co. Meath).

Unusual abundance of the Bank Vole in 1893.—The remarks by Mr. Oldfield Thomas in 'The Zoologist' for February (p. 54), on the unusual abundance of the Bank Vole during the past year, have been to some extent confirmed by my own experience in trapping near Macclesfield. I commenced trapping about four months ago, October to February, and during this period I found *Mus sylvaticus* decidedly the commonest species. Next in order of frequency I found *Microtus glareolus* and (some way below

in point of numbers) *M. agrestis*, of which I got very few. I have never caught anything but *Mus sylvaticus* in cold or stormy weather, which tends to show that this species is the hardiest. Since the commencement of the New Year, however, I have hardly had any Bank Voles in the traps, not more than two or three, while *Mus sylvaticus* is as plentiful as before. Possibly the few nights we had of severe frost may have killed off the less hardy Voles. I have also secured several Shrews, three specimens of *Sorex vulgaris*, and one of *S. pygmæus*.—NEWMAN NEAVE (Rainon, near Macclesfield).

BIRDS.

The Birds of Derbyshire.—*A propos* of the criticism of Mr. Whitlock's book, 'The Birds of Derbyshire,' which appeared in the last number (p. 78], and of the reviewer's remark that he had not found any reference to the most important collection in that county, that of Sir Vauncey Crewe, at Calke Abbey, the author writes to us as follows:—"With regard to the Calke Abbey collection I can only say that the noble owner, for reasons, which were no doubt quite competent, did not find it convenient to allow me an opportunity for inspection. But while I regret the absence of Sir Vauncey Crewe's notes, I did not feel called upon to indefinitely postpone its publication on this account alone. Moreover, it is inaccurate to state that no mention is made of the Calke Abbey collection. As an instance, I may quote the case of the Whiskered Tern, perhaps the most interesting of all the accidental visitors to Derbyshire, particulars of which are given on page 218." After referring in some detail to other points in the review with which he is dissatisfied, and which we cannot find room to discuss, he concludes with the remark that if, as the reviewer suggests, there are some who may be able to give additional information relating to the avifauna of the county, he will be very glad to receive their notes or criticism.

Ornithological Notes from West Surrey.—I send the following notes from my diary for 1893, in case they may prove of interest:—On January 3rd Mr. S. A. Davies saw a Bittern, *Botaurus stellaris*, in the water-meadows at Hurtmore, Godalming. In this month a Pochard, *Fuligula ferina*, appeared on the River Wey below Godalming, and remained several days. Mallard and Teal were fairly plentiful throughout the frost in the water-meadows. In February a small flock of Lesser Redpolls, *Acanthis rufescens*, appeared in the alders below Godalming, and three were taken by a local bird-catcher. In March large numbers of Ducks appeared in the water-meadows between Godalming and Shalford. On March 31st Mr. S. A. Davies saw a Buzzard of some species on a common near Elstead, and on April 3rd I went with him to the place and saw a pair of these birds. On April 10th I observed a pair of Geese in a meadow near Catteshall; they turned out to be Canada Geese which had escaped from

confinement; one was afterwards shot. On April 11th Mr. Davies saw a pair of Green Sandpipers, *Totanus ochropus*, on migration near Elstead. Nothing of special interest occurred during the summer months, but during the first week in August we again saw several Green Sandpipers with Common Sandpipers on migration; the latter were very common on our river all this month. On Sept. 11th I went with Mr. Davies to a large pond in the neighbourhood of Farnham, where, to my great surprise, I saw a solitary Golden Plover, *Charadrius pluvialis*, among some Peewits, an unusually early date for this species. We also saw a Greenshank, *Totanus canescens*, feeding on the shores of the lake; this bird was very wary, but with the aid of a glass we were able to identify it perfectly. On the 16th we saw an unusually large "charm" of Goldfinches, quite forty or fifty birds. On Sept. 20th I heard a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, *Picus minor*. On Oct. 9th the first winter Snipe arrived, and on the 17th the first Teal; both these species breed in the neighbourhood, and we have found the nests within the last few years; they do not appear in the river valley in the summer months. On the 17th the first Fieldfares arrived. On the 31st a Kestrel, *Falco tinnunculus*, was found in a bedroom of our house. On Nov. 5th I was surprised to see a Snipe sitting on a boundary stone; also a Willow Wren or Chiffchaff, I am not sure which, as it was getting dusk at the time. On the 6th the first Redwings arrived. On the 15th the first Siskins, *Chrysomitris spinus*, arrived; five were taken by a bird-catcher, and the others have been with us ever since in considerable numbers, feeding on the catkins of the alders; they may be seen clinging to the twigs in every conceivable position, like Tits, and keeping up a low but incessant twittering,—with them are a few Lesser Redpolls; and Goldfinches, which seem very plentiful this autumn, consort with both species. On Dec. 17th I saw five Snipe sitting on a rail, and on the 18th Mr. Davies and I saw two Snipe perched on the top of an alder, quite 30 feet from the ground.—R. S. Robertson (Godalming).

Hybrid Sparrows.—The Rev. J. G. Tuck has recently forwarded for my inspection a Sparrow which was shot with a number of others on Jan. 13th, in a farm-yard near Bury St. Edmunds, and which he considered to be a hybrid between *Passer domesticus* and *Passer montanus*. In this opinion it is pretty evident he is right. The bird has the plumage of the Tree Sparrow, but with only a faint indication of the black cheek-patch, and has the crown almost grey, like that of the House Sparrow, while the beak in size and form is intermediate between the two. Considering that the Tree Sparrow is locally common, and the House Sparrow generally abundant, such hybrids as this might be expected to occur frequently in a state of nature. Possibly they do; but if so, they are rarely detected. Several instances have been reported of the two species pairing in captivity. One such case occurred in an aviary at the Zoological Society's Gardens in

1880, though the eggs were not hatched. Another and more successful instance was noted at Norwich, where a young hybrid was reared and is now preserved in the collection of Mr. J. H. Gurney. But I have not hitherto met with more than one reported case of such a hybrid occurring in a wild state. This one is mentioned by Mr. A. Suchetet, in his very useful papers on Wild Hybrid Birds (part iii. p. 275) published in the 'Memoires de la Société Zoologique de France' (vol. v. 1892). It was obtained in France by the late M. Lemetteil, of Bolbec, Seine Inférieure, in December, 1868. The additional instance now brought forward by Mr. Tuck is, therefore, of some interest. On a comparison of his specimen with that in the possession of Mr. Gurney, it was found to be greyer on the crown, to have less black upon the throat, and to have the black cheek-patch not nearly so well defined. Mr. Tuck having kindly entrusted it to my care for a few days, I took the opportunity of exhibiting it at a meeting of the Linnean Society held on the 15th February last, when it naturally attracted much attention from the ornithologists who were present.—J. E. Harting.

Woodcocks Breeding in the Lake District. — A short time ago I learnt incidentally that for several years past Woodcocks had bred regularly in that part of the Lake District lying between Coniston and Skelwith,—that is, in the thickets of Grisedale, Tilberthwaite, and Eller Water. Being anxious to ascertain the truth of the report, I visited the locality, and was fortunate in interviewing an intelligent man now employed as foreman and book-keeper at the Tilberthwaite slate-quarry. He had formerly been a gamekeeper in the employment of the Duke of Buccleuch, and (for a gamekeeper) had a loving knowledge of the habits of birds. He assured me that for some years back—"about seven or eight"—Woodcocks had remained in that neighbourhood, and had reared their young in the copses. He had seen many nests, and had watched the life-progress of the young ones. The whole of the land and the woods in this district (or nearly so) are the property of Mr. Marshall, and it is sincerely to be hoped that efforts will be made to protect the many birds at present to be found there. On the occasion of my visit I noted by the way-side, and in the woods and in the air, twenty-two different kinds of birds. The day (Feb. 5th) was a phenomenally genial one, and I heard Song Thrushes, Robins, and Chaffinches singing gaily.—G. W. Murdoch (Kendal).

Grey Phalarope in Staffordshire.—An adult female of this species, changing to winter plumage, was shot on Oct. 4th last, at Willenhall, Staffordshire, by Mr. Taylor. It was found upon a small stream, and was alone. This is, I think, the first on record for Staffordshire.—F. Coburn (Holloway Head, Birmingham). [No; see Garner's List, p. 285.—Ed.]

Swimming Powers of the Dipper. — If any additional evidence to that given in the 'Zoologist' is needed, I may state that last August, when

shooting near Towyn, Wales, I saw a Dipper, *Cinclus aquaticus*, enter the water from the opposite bank of a wide, but still stream. It swam steadily and easily, in a slanting direction up the stream to the other side, swam low in the water, and looked very much like a Water Vole crossing a stream.—F. Coburn (Holloway Head, Birmingham).

Wildfowl in Merionethshire.—Following the great gale of November last, between the 16th to 20th of that month, several birds appeared at Penrhyndeudraeth, Merionethshire, which, though common enough on the east coast of England, seldom visit North Wales. On the 18th, during the height of the gale, I shot an immature Long-tailed Duck, *Harelda glacialis*, as it was diving close under the rocks in the estuary there. On the 22nd I saw a Sclavonian Grebe with fully developed ruff—a late date for this bird to retain the summer plumage. Early on the morning of the 27th I noticed a pair of Bewick's Swans on the north beach; they did not remain long, however, but passed inland, disappearing over the hills to the N.E. On the evening of the same day, while waiting for Ducks at flight time, I killed a Grey Phalarope, *Phalaropus fulicarius*, at the edge of a pool on the saltings near the village of Talsarnan. Lastly, on Dec. 4th, I shot a Snow Bunting, *Plectrophanus nivalis*, from a flock which was feeding in company with Linnets on the mud banks in Pensarn estuary.—G. H. Caton Haigh (Aber-Ia, Penrhyndeudraeth, Merionethshire, N.W.).

Nesting of the Great Crested Grebe in the North of Ireland.—In March last year, being in Ireland, I went on the 29th of that month—a beautifully fine day—to a village about three miles from the one in which I was then staying, to have a look at a large artificial lake which I had heard of as being the resort of some Great Crested Grebes, *Podicipes cristatus*. On approaching the lake we could see their white breasts glistening in the sunshine. There were nine of these birds on the lake. We walked round to get a nearer inspection of them, and on our way we flushed three Snipe, also a flock of nine Teal and some Wild Ducks. While looking at the Grebes we saw two of them lower their heads suddenly and swim rapidly towards one another, and when they met (their heads being parallel to the water till they did so) they crossed their beaks and raised themselves slightly from the water; they then swam away again. This strange performance I am told they go through before they commence to make their nests. A friend mentioned to me in a letter that on this lake, later in the summer, he saw a Great Crested Grebe swimming about, followed by some young ones, and he had no doubt that more than one pair had nested there. The lake is in the north of Ireland, but I do not want to give the name of the situation, for who can tell what molestation these fine birds may experience if any "collector" should chance to go that way.—G. B. Horsbrugh (4, Richmond Hill, Bath).

Hybrid Finches at the Crystal Palace Bird Show.—At the recent Bird Show at the Crystal Palace there were not quite so many hybrid finches as usual. Only a dozen specimens were exhibited, the most interesting being crosses between the Bullfinch and Redpoll, the Siskin and Goldfinch, and a bird numbered 1559, but undescribed in the catalogue, which, in my opinion, was a Linnet and Goldfinch hybrid. The specimen awarded first prize was entered as "Linnet and Bullfinch," although this was apparently a mistake, for the bird appeared to be a cross between the Bullfinch and Goldfinch, of which some other fine examples were, as usual, on view. The entries in the classes reserved for Canary mules numbered 138, including crosses with the Goldfinch, Linnet, Siskin, Bullfinch, Redpoll, and Greenfinch. Of the other birds, in the British classes, the most interesting were some Kingfishers, a Tree Creeper, a Redstart, and two fine Cornish Choughs.—A. Holte Macpherson (51, Gloucester Place, Hyde Park).

Pink-footed Goose in Dumfriesshire.—In former days the Bean Goose was the most common grey goose on the Solway Firth. Of late years it has, in my experience, been replaced to some extent by *Anser brachyrhynchus*. I lately identified the remains of a Pink-footed Goose, which had been shot out of a flock on the Scottish side of the estuary, between Annan and Gretna.—H. A. Macpherson (Carlisle).

Short-eared Owls in Northumberland.—Mr. R. Service's description of the extraordinary destruction of young Short-eared Owls by Foxes (Zool. p. 57) must, I think, have caused no little amazement amongst your ornithological readers. During the whole of the spring, summer, and autumn of 1893 we had these Owls constantly on the grouse moors adjoining Cheviot and Hedgehope, in Northumberland. When shooting at Ilderton last week (Jan. 31) I still noticed them hunting about as usual, but I had not heard that any special mortality exists here amongst them. Though without actual proof, I have little doubt that these birds bred on the Northumberland moors during the spring of 1893.—Alfred C. Chapman (Moor House, Leamside, Durham).

Snow Buntings in Co. Kildare.—During the winters of 1891–92 and 1892–93 a great number of Snow Buntings (*Plectrophanus nivalis*) visited the Curragh of Kildare. During the winter of 1891–92 I was in England from Oct. 15th to Dec. 30th; previous to the first of these dates no Snow Buntings had arrived; after my return to the Curragh I first noticed them on Jan. 7th, 1892, from which date I frequently saw them until Feb. 25th, after which day I saw no more. During the winter of 1892–93 I was away from the Curragh from Oct. 1st to Dec. 14th, and had not seen a Snow Bunting before I left; but on Dec. 15th I saw a large flock of about thirty birds, and continued to come across them almost daily until March 10th, which was the last day I saw any. This winter the flocks were larger than the last, and there were certainly more of these birds about. Although I

was constantly out over the country all round the Curragh, yet I never came across any Snow Buntings except on the open downs of the Curragh itself. I should very much like to know about what date Snow Buntings may be expected to arrive at the Curragh.—ARTHUR W. HASTED.

Great Spotted Woodpecker in North Wales.—A bird which I think, from the description given me, was most likely *Picus major*, was seen by a friend of mine in the garden at Tyn-y-Coed, Arthog, N. Wales, during the first week in November last.—ARTHUR W. HASTED.

Pied Flycatcher and Grey Wagtail in North Wales.—I saw a pair of the former, on May 5th last, at Arthog, N. Wales, and am told that *Muscicapa atricapilla* is frequently met with in that part of the country. On the same day I had the pleasure of watching a pair of Grey Wagtails, *Motacilla boarula*, for some time.—ARTHUR W. HASTED.

Waders on the Solway Firth.—It is a curious fact that the Solway Firth is visited almost every year by certain species which are excessively rare on the west coast of Scotland. The Spotted Redshank, *Totanus fuscus*, and the Little Stint, *Tringa minuta*, are species in point. A few Little Stints visit us every year, and we meet with them both on the Scottish and English sides of the Solway Firth. Since we have searched for the Spotted Redshank, it has been met with in immature plumage nearly every autumn, almost always in the same part of the Solway. The Grey Plover, *Squatarola helvetica*, is seldom seen on the west coast of Scotland. The numbers that visit the Solway Firth vary very much, especially in the spring of the year, when assuming the black breasts before their departure. One was brought to me lately which had been stuffed by a farm servant; he did not think the black feathers of the breast sufficiently deep in colour, so had tried to improve upon Nature by staining them with ink, which has left a purplish stain upon the plumage. We can rarely get a black-breasted Grey Plover; the bulk of the old birds that winter on the Solway Firth delay their arrival with us until after they have assumed full winter livery. I have seen birds killed in nuptial plumage in September, and Mr. Seebohm thought they must be spring-killed birds. The birds in nuptial livery that visit us in autumn are always very wild and difficult to approach; unlike the Golden Plover, which always seem to me to be tamest when in full livery.—H. A. MACPHERSON (Carlisle).

Little Gull on the Solway Firth.—Although the Little Gull, *Larus minutus*, wanders to the Solway Firth at not infrequent intervals, I never met with it on the Scottish side of our estuary until the present winter. In January last an immature bird of this species was shot on the Solway between Annan and Dumfries. It is in very similar plumage to a specimen which was obtained on the English side of the water on the 25th of October last.—H. A. MACPHERSON (Carlisle).

Garganey at Rainworth, Notts.—Though I have already mentioned in 'The Field' that a pair of these ducks were seen on the lake here in April last year, I should like to note in 'The Zoologist' that they were seen on April 9th and 10th. This was the first time they had ever been observed on any of the ponds about here, although we have looked for them for years, and their occurrence therefore is of some interest.—J. WHITAKER (Rainworth, Notts).

Mobbing by Crows.—Most naturalists will remember Bates's account of being mobbed by Curl-crested Toucans, *Pteroglossus Beauharnaisii*, on the Amazons. Birds less gregarious will sometimes do this; of course it is easy, by holding up a young bird, to bring down the parents within a few feet from among a crowd of Gulls and Terns on their breeding-grounds; but the Crow is, as a rule, not abundant or bold enough in this country to assemble for the purpose of mobbing anyone. In Denmark, however, in the fine beech and fir woods that stretch for about 20 miles north of Copenhagen, from Charlottenlund to Hornbaek, the Hooded Crow, *Corvus cornix*, is very abundant, and exceedingly impudent and tame, being but little molested there. I was once fairly driven away and routed by them. I had ascended a tree in order to inspect a nest of young Crows, which were so well fledged, however, that, on my head appearing over the edge of the nest, they all fluttered out, two falling to the ground near the foot of the tree. I accordingly descended, and, after a little trouble, caught one of them and proceeded to examine it. At first it kept quite quiet, until I tried to open its beak to examine the colour of the palate. This, however, seemed more than it could stand, and it called out so noisily, and so startled me with its suddenness and violence, that I almost let it drop to the ground. At once the other young ones began screaming also, and in a few seconds the parents appeared, settling overhead, and adding to the din. Presently two others came hurrying up, then more and more, until there must have been upwards of two dozen, and the noise—to use an expressive Scoticism—was fairly "deaving." The fury of the birds was remarkable; they were simply convulsed with rage, and could hardly remain quiet on the branches. The noise became so unendurable that I was forced to beat a speedy and ignominious retreat. In this case, of course, the cry of the young bird was the exciting cause; but these Crows do not always require that incentive, for once coming suddenly to the edge of a small swampy savannah in the forest, I surprised a flock of thirty or forty feeding; these at once rose on the wing, but, instead of flying away, began to wheel about and follow me along the edge of the wood, each vying with its neighbour in abusive outcry. This only lasted for a minute or so, for—like a flash—a little male Hobby, whose mate was sitting on eggs close at hand, appeared amongst them, and, with a few lightning-like "stoops" right and left, dispersed the entire flock. They seemed frightened at the Hobby, though they torment

and mob the Buzzard unmercifully. In England and Scotland I have brought the mother Crow, *C. corone*, within a few yards by holding up a partly-fledged young one; but the male bird usually keeps well out of gun-shot, and none other than the Crows immediately interested show any concern.—Harold Raeburn (Halifax).

SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES.

Linnean Society of London.

February 1*st*, 1894.—Prof. Stewart, President, in the chair.

Sir Hugh Low and Mr. F. C. Smith were admitted Fellows. Dr. Johann-Mueller and Mr. K. Mitsukuri were recommended by the Council for election as Foreign Members.

The President exhibited a remarkable specimen of a South-African butterfly, *Teracolus halyattes*, from Natal, in which the wings on one side were those of a male and on the other those of a female, and made some remarks on hermaphroditism in the Lepidoptera.

On behalf of Mr. William Borrer, of Cowfold, Sussex, there was exhibited a skull of the Pine Marten, *Martes sylvatica*, Nilsson, from a specimen killed near Crawley (Zool. 1891, p. 458), an examination of which confirmed the view of the late E. R. Alston (Proc. Zool. Soc. 1879, p. 469), that, so far as could be ascertained, this is the only species of Marten found in the British Islands.

On behalf of Mr. W. B. Tegetmeier, there was exhibited a drawing of a Snow Leopard, taken for the first time from life—namely, from the animal now living in the Zoological Society's Gardens, Regent's Park. The long, thick, and soft fur, suggestive of a cold habitat, and the unusual size of the wide-spreading feet, well suited for travelling over an expanse of yielding snow, were noteworthy features.

Mr. Malcolm Laurie read a paper on the Morphology of the *Pedipalpi*. He considered the first two ventral sclerites to the abdomen to be appendages, and not sternites. The first of these—the genital operculum—covers the ventral surface of two segments, the genital aperture, and the first pair of lung-books lying beneath it. The first pair of lung-books, he thought, probably represent the remains of the appendage of the second segment. The arrangement of this region resembles that in *Eurypteridæ* and in the spiders (e. g. *Liphistius*), while differing markedly from that in Scorpions. The posterior end of the intestine is dilated into a large stercoral pouch which is part of the mid-gut, the malpighian tubes arising from its posterior end. The cephalothoracic portion of the mid-gut differs in

structure from the abdominal portion, and, in addition to lateral diverticula, has two median ventral diverticula. The coxal gland opens at the base of the third pair of appendages, and a sensory organ of unknown function occurs on each side of the last segment. An interesting discussion followed, in which Mr. R. J. Pocock, Mr. H. M. Bernard, and the President took part, and Mr. Laurie replied.

A paper was then communicated by Mr. W. West, "On the Fresh-water Algæ of the West Indies," in which several new species were described and beautifully illustrated. Mr. G. Murray, in criticising this paper, testified to the extreme care and accuracy with which the species had been worked out.

Feb. 15*th.*—Prof. STEWART, President, in the chair.

Mr. Linnæus Gr[illegible]ning was elected, and Mr. Albert Smith was admitted a Fellow of the Society.

Mr. W. B. Hemsley exhibited some germinating seeds of *Lemna* and some flowering plants of *Lemna gibba*, upon which, in his absence, some remarks were made by Mr. C. H. Wright. From the observations made, it was inferred that although *Lemna minor* and *L. gibba* are usually regarded as distinct, they are respectively the male and female plant of one species.

On behalf of the Director of the Royal Gardens, Kew, Mr. C. H. Wright exhibited and made some remarks upon a collection of native plants from the neighbourhood of Cape Town, which had been presented to the Herbarium by Miss Yorke, and which was remarkable for the skilful way in which the natural colours of the plants had been preserved.

On behalf of the Rev. J. G. Tuck, of Tostock Rectory, Bury St. Edmunds, there was exhibited a hybrid between the Common House Sparrow and the Tree Sparrow, *Passer montanus*, which had been taken near Bury on the Jan. 13th last. Only one instance of a similar wild hybrid was said to have been previously captured, although two or three instances were on record of the two species interbreeding in aviaries.

Mr. J. C. Willis gave an abstract of a paper on the Natural History of the Flower (Part II.), in which he dealt with the mode of fertilization in *Brodiæa ixioides*, S. Watson; *Stanhopea tigrina*, Bateman; *Pimelea decussata*, R. Br., var. *diosmæfolia*, *Cotyledon umbilicus*, L.; *Hydrolæa spinosa*, L.; *Ziziphora capitata*, and made some remarks on cleistogamy in *Salvia verbenaca*, L. A discussion followed, in which Dr. D. H. Scott, Prof. Reynolds Green, and Mr. A. B. Rendle took part.

The Secretary read a paper, by Miss D. F. Pertz, "On Hygroscopic movements connected with seed-dispersal," in which the author partially reviewed the literature of the subject, and detailed the method of observation adopted by previous workers and by herself.

Zoological Society of London.

February 6th, 1894. — Sir W. H. Flower, K.C.B., LL.D., F.R.S., President, in the chair.

The Secretary read a report on the additions that had been made to the Society's Menagerie during the month of January, 1894.

Mr. Sclater exhibited a fine specimen of the River-hog of Madagascar, from the Tring Museum, lent for exhibition by the Hon. W. Rothschild, and pointed out that three distinct species of this well-marked genus of *Suidæ* were now known to occur in the Ethiopian Region. A communication from Mr. Last gave an account of the habits of this animal, as observed in Madagascar.

Mr. Sclater also exhibited a stuffed specimen of the White-billed Great Northern Diver, *Colymbus adamsi*, from Norway, which had been lent to him by Prof. R. Collett, and made remarks on the distribution of the species, and on its interest as occasionally occurring on the British coast.

Prof. Howes read a paper on synosteosis and curvature of the spine in fishes, with especial reference to the Common Sole.

Mr. F. E. Beddard gave an account of the development of the tadpole of an African Frog, *Xenopus lævis*, as observed in specimens of this Batrachian hatched and reared in the Society's Gardens.

Mr. Chas. W. Andrews gave an account of some remains of the extinct gigantic bird (*Æpyornis*) which had been recently received at the British Museum from several localities in Madagascar. These were referred to three species—*Æ. muelleri*, *Æ. medius*, and *Æ. titan*, the last being of larger size than even *Æ. maximus*. Another set of remains showed differences which might eventually prove to be of generic importance, and were perhaps referable to the newly-established genus *Muellerornis*.

Mr. M. Barkley read some notes on the Antelopes of the Pungue Valley, East Africa, as observed by him during a recent hunting expedition in that district.

The Marquis of Hamilton made some observations on the Antelopes met with by him during a recent excursion from the Pungue along the coast northwards towards the Zambesi.

Mr. O. Thomas read the description of a new species of Bat of the genus *Stenoderma* from Montserrat, West Indies, proposed to be called *S. montserratense*. This bat was stated to be very injurious to the cacao-plantations in that island.—P. L. Sclater, *Secretary*.

Entomological Society of London.

February 7th, 1894.—Henry John Elwes, Esq., F.L.S., President, in the chair.

The President announced that he had nominated the Rt. Hon. Lord Walsingham, LL.D., F.R.S.; Professor Edward B. Poulton, M.A., F.R.S.,

and Colonel Charles Swinhoe, M.A., F.L.S., Vice-Presidents of the Society for the session 1894–95.

Mr. Walter F. Baker, of 18, Hyde Terrace, Leeds; Mr. Percy M. Bright, of Roccabruna, Bournemouth; Professor Lewis Compton Miall, F.R.S., of the Yorkshire College, Leeds; and Mr. Edwin Wilson, of Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge, were elected Fellows of the Society.

Mr. Jenner Weir exhibited, on behalf of Mr. J. M. Adye, a specimen of *Plusia moneta*, Fabr., which had been captured at Christchurch, Hants, and remarked that this species, which had been found in this country for the first time so recently as June, 1890, was apparently becoming a permanent resident here, as it had been since taken in several of the southern counties. The food-plant, *Aconitum napellus*, though rare in England as a wild plant, was very common in gardens. Mr. Jenner Weir also exhibited a nearly black specimen of *Venilia macularia*, L., the yellow markings being reduced to a few small dots.

Mr. Hamilton Druce exhibited a female specimen of *Hypochrysops scintillans*, lately received by him from Mioko, New Ireland. He said that only the male of this species had been as yet described.

Mr. F. Enock exhibited a nest of the British Trap-door Spider, *Atypus piceus*, recently found near Hastings by Mrs. Enock.

Mr. W. F. H. Blandford stated that he had recently obtained an additional species of *Scolyto-platypus* from Japan, which, though closely allied to the species he had formerly described, showed a very distinct modification of the male prosternum.

Mr. M. Jacoby exhibited and remarked on a specimen of *Leptispa pygmæa*, Baly, which was doing much injury to sugar-cane in the Bombay Presidency of India. Mr. G. C. Champion stated that he had found an allied species on bamboo.

Dr. F. A. Dixey read a paper—which was illustrated by the oxyhydrogen lantern—"On the Phylogeny of the *Pierinæ* as illustrated by their wing-markings and geographical distribution." A long discussion ensued, in which the President, Mr. Osbert Salvin, Mr. Jacoby, Colonel Swinhoe, Mr. Jenner Weir, Mr. Hampson, and Mr. Kenrick took part.

Dr. T. A. Chapman read a paper entitled "Some notes on those species of Micro-Lepidoptera, allied to *Micropteryx*, whose larvæ are external feeders, and chiefly on the early stages of *Eriocephala calthella*." Mr. Hampson and the President made some remarks on the subject of the paper.

Mr. Hamilton H. Druce read a paper entitled "Description of the female of *Hypochrysops scintillans*, Butler."

The Rev. Dr. Walker communicated a paper by Mr. R. H. F. Rippon, entitled "Description of a variety of *Ornithoptera* (*Priamoptera*) *urvilliana*."

—H. Goss & W. W. Fowler, *Hon. Secretaries.*

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